

## Turning Page by GallifreyGod

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**Characters:** Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Mentions of Bob Newby, Will Byers

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**Summary:**

When he is unable to wake Joyce from a severe night terror, Jonathan calls Hopper in the middle of the night for help. And like always, Hop is ready to do anything he can to help her.

## Turning Page

### Author's Note:

Inspired by the song Turning Page by Sleeping at Last

It was one of *those* nightmares again, the ones that Joyce had been no stranger to. It always felt so real, as if she was stuck inside the past while her shoes stayed glued to the ground. She watched in horror, time and time again as Bob was ripped to pieces by the demodogs. She was never able to do anything but cry for him as his final moments ended in slow motion. Hopper never pulled her away in the dreams like he did in reality and Mike was never there screaming from outside the building. Just Joyce, stuck in her steps while she watched her boyfriend hold his hand out to her in a desperate attempt to be saved.

She never could figure out how to wake up from these dreams. Usually, Jonathan would come to her aid when the screaming got to be too loud, but this time she just wasn't waking up. He tried everything from shaking her awake to yelling but she wouldn't budge. As Joyce kicked and screamed through the nightmare, Jonathan did the only thing he could think of.

He called Hopper.

"I'll be right there." the words barely left Jim's mouth before the keys were in the ignition and he sped out of the driveway. Jane honestly couldn't have picked a better night to stay with Max. He floored the blazer 20 miles over the speed limit, only his headlights illuminating the midnight roads. As he drove to the opposite side of town, Hop could still hear Joyce's screams echoing through his mind. Not 15 seconds on the phone with Jonathan and he heard the blood-curdling cries from across the house.

Veering off to the left, the gravel of the Byers' driveway crackled under his speeding tires. Jonathan was already standing at the door waiting while Hopper stepped out of the truck. Still wearing his flannel pajama bottoms and tan henley shirt, Jim ran through the

house to sound of Joyce's violent screams.

"I..I didn't know who else to call! She won't wake up and I don't know how to help!" Jonathan cried as he followed Hopper through the house. The oldest son had seen the nightmares that Will had after his return, but nothing could compare to the night terrors that Joyce had suffered. "It's alright, kid. I'm glad you called." Jim patted the teen's shoulder, hoping it would take away some of his panic as he finally got to Joyce's room.

She was thrashing in between the sheets, drenched in sweat and tears. Hopper sat down on her bed and pulled Joyce into his arms, trying to avoid her swinging kicks and punches. Holding her against his chest, he ran his hand over her back and tried to calm her as best as he could.

"Joyce, Joyce it's me, Hopper," he whispered as she sobbed and screamed against him. "It's okay, Joyce. You're okay. Shh, it's okay." he swayed with her in his arms while her kicking cries began to die down. Jim had never heard such a deafening scream bellow from her lungs in all the years of knowing her. He'd be lying if he said it didn't break his heart too.

Hopper knew about the nightmares since Jonathan had mentioned them before. He reassured her oldest son that if it had gotten worse that he'd always be able to come over but the nightmares had never been bad enough for Jonathan to call.

Joyce finally went completely still in his arms, lightly snoring away as if nothing happened. While the moments passed, Hopper looked up to see the two boys, mouths agape and completely shaken up by the event.

"I'm gonna take her back to the cabin. She can sleep in my bed and I'll take the couch that way you can get some rest and I'll keep an eye on her." Hop whispered, entirely out of breath as he clutched her to his chest.

"Okay," Jonathan nodded, still not entirely sure of what just happened. As he watched Hopper wrap his mother up in an afghan, he still felt himself quivering from the shock. He didn't realize just

how fast his heart was pounding until he could hear it in his ears.

"Are you gonna be okay here by yourselves for a little while?" Hop asked, picking Joyce up into his arms bridal style. Both boys nodded nervously as the Chief started for the door with her tucked against his chest. Before Hopper left, he reassured the boys that she would be safe and that he would have her back in the morning. He hated to leave the boys so shaken but it was clear that they all needed some rest without chance of interruption.

He gently placed Joyce in the front seat of the car and buckled her up over the blanket she was wrapped in. Trying not to wake her up, Hopper shut the door lightly and climbed into the driver's seat. As he gave one last nod to the boys looking through their window, he drove off into the cold and dreary night.

When they finally reached the cabin, he pulled himself out of the truck and tried to figure out the best way not to wake her up. Wrapping her back up in his arms the same way he carried her out, he held her limp body closely as he made his way back to the house.

Joyce stirred in her sleep before throwing her arm around his neck, nuzzling her head into his chest. "*Hopper*," she mumbled, her words muffled into his jacket. Jim grinned softly before leaning in to open the door for them.

"Where am I?" Joyce whispered, starting to wake up just as he laid her down on the couch. She felt the couch dip as Jim sat down on the opposite end. Within the three seconds of waking up and becoming aware, she immediately began to panic.

"You're with me, Joyce." the recognition of Hopper's voice automatically soothed the anxiety rising in her stomach.

"Did you kidnap me from my house?" she asked with a small and tired chuckle while rubbing her fists against her eyes to help adjust her sight. She could barely see his face from the lack of light in the small cabin.

"You had a pretty bad nightmare so Jonathan called me," Hopper explained, the flame of his lighter glowing against his face as he lit a

cigarette. He took a long drag before handing it over to her.

"Oh God, Hop, I'm so sorry. You didn't have to come get me!" she panicked as the guilt begun to settle in. Joyce had always prided herself in being able to handle almost everything on her own, but even though she trusted Hopper, she still felt the embarrassment of losing a little bit of her control.

"It's okay, it was my idea. I thought that if you could rest here that the boys might have some peace of mind and get some sleep." he replied, taking hold of the cigarette she was passing back. He could see the guilt still stuck on her face; the knit brows and quivering lip that she wore when she felt bad.

When the memories of the reoccurring nightmare started to surface, Joyce could only sit and reflect in silence. Uncountable amounts of feelings rushed through her veins as she fought to think of the right words. Anger that she couldn't get this under control? Guilt that Hopper had to come save her from herself like a damsel in distress? Regret that she couldn't get to Bob fast enough? Anxiety because her mind kept reminding her of that too?

"Joyce," Hop whispered, breaking the silence. "You know that if you need to talk that I'm here to listen, right?"

a beat.

Her voiced cracked the minute she spoke. "I just, I don't know what to do anymore." she sniffled, her voice as low as the floorboards while she tried not to break down in hysterics. She was just so tired. Battling an unwinnable war in her mind every second of every day. She was just so fucking tired.

"The anniversary effect. That thing that Doc Owens was talking about? It applies in this situation too." Hopper said as he shifted closer down the couch towards her. Joyce didn't even have to say what her nightmares were about, Jim knew. He knew that November 4th was inching closer and closer every day and Joyce's smiles had started to grow colder by the minute.

"The guilt starts to eat you up. Every day it just starts to pile on, brick

by brick. I have replayed that scenario and many others in my mind and every day I think of a new way I could've saved him." Joyce sighed, taking a long and much earned inhale of their cigarette.

"There was nothi-" his words were instantly cut off. "I know, Hop. I know. But somehow I can't convince myself that it's true because then I would have to come to terms with his death and at the end of the day, his death was my fault. I really should've known better than to drag someone new into this crazy life I live because it seems like everybody around me just gets sucked into the craziness too."

Another moment of silence passed before Hopper could find the right words. "Like a black hole," he whispered, staring down at his lap with the reoccurring feeling of shame washing over him.

"What?" Joyce asked quietly, watching him slump down.

"It feels like a black hole. Like everything around you falls through and you're just the epicenter of it all. I know that feeling too." just as he finished speaking, Hopper could see the tears beginning to stream down Joyce's cheeks.

Leaning over closer to her, he cupped her cheeks gently in his palms. "Look at me, Joyce." As she looked up at him with her watery doe eyes, he wiped away her tears with his calloused thumbs. "You are not alone. Not this time."

Before he could stop himself, Hopper leaned forward and softly pressed his lips to hers. Bliss. Only bliss for the never-ending five seconds of the kiss he had been dreaming of since 3rd grade. When he gently pulled away, he could see the soft and teary-eyed smile that he had grown to love. Joyce collapsed into him, resting herself in his arms while he pulled her blanket over them.

And with nothing but the blue-hued cigarette smoke in the air, the night drifted on with them together.

### **Author's Note:**

Duffer Brothers own the rights to these characters!